

must continue to seek a resolution in cases where questions remain;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI, Acting Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in accordance with Chapter 99 of the Acts of 1986, do hereby proclaim September 19th, 1997, to be PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION RECOGNITION DAY and urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

IS CONGRESS FAILING OR IS IT JUST MISUNDERSTOOD

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on September 13, the Center for the Study of the Congress at Duke University held a roundtable discussion to analyze the low and often hostile opinions of the Congress held by the American people. I participated in the roundtable, which was entitled "Is Congress Failing, or Is It Just Misunderstood?" Reflected one of its major objectives—to distinguish between misconceptions people have about how Congress does and might function, on the one hand, and areas in which the institution is failing to satisfy reasonable expectations on the other.

Joining me in the roundtable discussion were U.S. Rep. DAVID DREIER, Elaine Povich of Newsday, Candy Crowley of CNN, survey research expert Peter Hart, and scholars of congressional studies, media and public affairs, Joseph Cappella, John Hibbing, Tom Mann, and David Rohde.

Two bedrock points brought the participants together. First, understanding and responding to Congress' low regard is important for the country. The United States, lacking the relatively homogeneous culture that serves to unite many countries, has grown together around its common Constitution and its political institutions and convictions. Before loss of confidence in our Government threatens our sense of shared identity, we ought to do what we can to restore that confidence. Public opinion polling shows that the public views the Congress as the most powerful of the three branches of Government, so that the general distrust of Government expressed in many surveys gets concentrated on that body.

Second, no one advocated anything beyond trying to restore a healthy skepticism toward the institution, the kind of vigilant attitude that has served the country well. Still, as Tom Mann has pointed out, today this skepticism frequently borders on corrosive cynicism, and sometimes slips over into it. This already-in-place conviction that whatever Congress is going to do will disadvantage ordinary citizens saps Congress' ability to take tough stands on hard issues. We understand that Presidents need the political capital to make the tough decision; the same holds for the Congress.

Continuing research on the public's attitude add considerable detail to the blunt image of angry voters that so dominated the 1994 elections. Recent surveys done by Peter Hart for the Council for Excellence in Government show that five of the top seven reasons for the low public confidence focus on our elected of-

ficials failing to assert leadership in addressing the public's concerns, and John Hibbing's studies of public attitudes toward the Congress confirm this. As Hibbing put it, the voice of the average American is getting drowned out of lobbyists trumpeting special interest and by the self interest of Members, whether this can be expressed through pay raises or through an obsession with re-election. Rounding out citizen impressions is the taint of hypocrisy: believing what they do about the real motives of Members, citizens react to Members' defense of their actions in public minded terms as hypocritical attempts to manipulate voters.

None of these characterizations fit the institution and its Members as well as Congress' worst critics assert. Close observers of the Congress continually testify to the dedication, hard work, and public spirit of Members and staff. Most Americans are not close observers, however, and, as Elaine Povich commented, one's sympathy for the institution varies inversely with proximity to the Capitol dome.

Sensibly sizing up Congress' strengths and weaknesses from afar runs into several sources of interference. First, many citizens harbor unrealistic expectations about how smoothly disputes can get resolved in a representative democracy, especially one designed to make blocking action much easier than taking action—OK, so there's some truth in the coffee-and-saucer story.

Second, media coverage of the Congress generates an image of the institution in which its warts, foibles, and inefficiencies loom larger than life and its laudable activity shrinks from view. Numerous analyses have documented the media's emphasis on conflict between Members, strategy over substance, and scandal at the cost of policy. Recent research has begun to link these types of coverage to citizen reactions to them, and the results are not auspicious for the institution. For example, Joseph Cappella's work at the Annenberg School finds a decided connection between stories written using a strategy framework and cynical reactions toward public officials involved. Candy Crowley noted that institutional changes such as more dependence on capsule TV reporting, the decrease in newspaper readership, the advent of tabloid TV journalism, the increase in TV magazine shows, and the explosion in talk radio and TV drive some of these media emphasis.

Third, Members aid and abet both the unrealistic expectations for institutional performance and the media's unhelpful tendencies. Members frequently lead the verbal assault on the institution for its inability to act, and all Members know that hot rhetoric that implicitly treats solutions to problems as obvious and simple is more likely to get coverage than modulated comments that credit the good faith of opponents and acknowledge the difficulties of the issues being debated. When Members refer to the institution as a cesspool, as in a remark recently made to DAVID DREIER by one of his colleagues, it becomes that much harder to criticize journalists for reporting on it that way.

Clear away these sources of interference, and you would still have an institution that needs to reform itself. No one at the Duke conference sought to absolve Congress itself from the obligation to do a better job at governance. I talked about the felt necessities of campaigning exert ever more pressure on

governing, reducing Members' willingness to take positions that may be correct, but are difficult to explain. David Rohde pointed out that we need campaign finance reform, if Americans were ever going to feel that interest groups and money are not the real powers in the Congress. More than one person noted that the negative tenor of modern campaigning only exacerbates poor images of Congress.

The responsibility for Congress' low regard can be found in many places—the design of the institution and its process, the behavior of its Members, the operation of the media, the constant and rancorous campaigns, the influence of special interests, and the expectations and knowledge of the citizenry. What is more the way in which each of these contribute to cynicism and low regard seem to mutually reinforcing. For this reason, any attempts at reform must proceed on several fronts at once.

Finally, I and other participants at the conference agreed on one point. We all know most, if not all of Congress' failings. However, almost to a person believe that it is much better than perceived. I am proud of the work of the Center for the Study of Congress in attempting to separate the Congress' real problems from the perceived ones and come up with a course of action to deal with both institutions.

[From the Sunday News & Observer, Sept. 14, 1997]

PANEL WEIGHS IMAGE OF CONGRESS—CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT CONGRESS ARE DISCUSSED BY 2 CONGRESSMEN, PROFESSORS, A POLLSTER, AND JOURNALISTS

(By Kyle Marshall)

DURHAM.—Those who think Congress feeds off conflict and controversy wouldn't get an argument from Rep. David Dreier, a California Republican.

But to describe today's Congress as a "cesspool," as one Democratic congressman put it to Dreier over lunch this week? That's going too far.

"I happen to love this institution," Dreier said of his place of employment. "And I take umbrage when I have many of my colleagues, who have chosen to be here and have stepped up wanting to be a part of it, maligning it."

Dreier, vice chairman of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, has spent a lot of time thinking about the role Congress plays in governing—and what needs to change to make it work better. On Saturday, he joined North Carolina Rep. David Price, a Democrat from Chapel Hill, on a panel with academics, pollsters and journalists to hash out the many complaints about Congress from the citizenry.

The forum, at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Congress, a newly formed arm of the Duke University School of Law.

Polls consistently show a lack of trust in Congress. To many on the panel, that comes as no surprise, because it has always been that way.

Tom Mann of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, noted that in the election of 1874, no fewer than 183 incumbents were thrown out of office in the wake of a bribery scandal. And Dreier quoted the House speaker in 1925, Nicholas Longworth, who said being a member of Congress had always been an unpopular task and always would be.

What has changed in just the past few years, however, is the amount of outright venom spewed at Congress—much of it inspired by special-interest groups and talk radio, some panelists said.

Dreier added some members of the institution itself to the list of groups responsible for creating hostility toward Congress.

"Many of the problems that are out there, I think have been caused by members in Congress . . . who have made a career of attacking the United States Congress," he said.

CNN correspondent Candy Crowley said public apathy represents a more serious threat to the institution's ability to engage in discourse and pass laws.

"I don't think the anger is a problem," she said. "The idea that it's not relevant is a problem."

The speakers had little time to come up with specific solutions for what ails Congress or for how to restore the Public's confidence. That daunting task will be left to future forums, said Ted Kaufman, a Duke law professor and former Senate staffer who is the center's co-chairman.

Pollster Peter Hart actually had some good news for the two members of Congress taking part in the discussion. His latest poll showed a 48 percent approval rating for the job Congress is doing, one of the highest in recent memory. A booming economy and the lack of a national crisis are two of the big reasons.

However, as if to illustrate that opinion surveys can show just about anything, Hart said the public's confidence in Congress as an institution is still rock-bottom: Only 21 percent say they have a "great deal" of confidence.

"That's the difference between performance, which will fluctuate up and down, and the other element, which is, 'How do I feel about the institution as a whole?'" he said. "Only the national news media fall below the Congress in confidence."

HONORING HELEN WRIGHT OF ZANESVILLE, OH

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following article to my colleagues.

Helen Wright of Zanesville, OH will be retiring on December 19, after 10 years of employment from the Zanesville-Muskingum County Port Authority. Ms. Wright served as the secretary of the Port Authority where she displayed much commitment and devotion to the region.

An achievement of this magnitude requires a great deal of hard work and dedication. Ms. Wright has diligently served mid-eastern Ohio for 10 years and deserves to be commended. It is precisely people like her that makes our community a better place to live and grow.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Helen Wright for her service to the Zanesville-Muskingum Port Authority. I wish her continued health, success, and prosperity in her retirement. Congratulations Ms. Wright.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONTRACTING PRACTICES

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the revitalization of our Nation's capital will require the

participation and commitment of both the public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships will be the anchor of any economic revitalization. This goal will be successful only if all participants are assured that this is a sincere effort, with a level playing field, and not simply an extension of the two decades of poor policy decisionmaking that helped spiral Washington, DC, into its recent situation.

The Congress has no desire to run the daily affairs of the city. However, the Congress does have a unique constitutional responsibility to the District of Columbia. Without micro-managing the affairs of the city, the Congress does need to ensure that as a matter of Federal policy, it will: support public-private efforts designed to assist in the Capital's revitalization; support creative, imaginative, and unique approaches; support the streamlining of the Federal and District review and regulatory processes, where appropriate, to encourage revitalization; and exercise appropriate oversight to ensure that the District honors all of its contractual and financial commitments.

It is well understood by the Congress that the District of Columbia continues to suffer from past financial problems. For example, the District of Columbia has experienced issues with a number of its current vendors as a result of its prior reputation of poor payment performance. A recent newspaper article documented that one of the reasons for schools not having textbooks was " * * * twelve textbook companies refused to ship books because the District still owes for previous orders."

Prior negligence in these matters created a ripple effect that has a broad and negative reach. Vendors have been discouraged from responding to D.C. RFP's because of concerns over the selection process. Congress can assist in eliminating this perception without direct intervention. Congress can also assure all current and prospective private sector partners and their respective lenders that it will monitor and respond appropriately to any failing by the government of the District of Columbia to meet acceptable government contracting practices.

PRAIRIE ROSE CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a belated recognition of the efforts of the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in their continuing effort to remind all Americans of the importance of the U.S. Constitution. This year, in honor of Constitution Day, the DAR published a series of Constitution Sidelights, which I am honored to submit to the RECORD.

These sidelights demonstrate that the Founders were real human beings with individual idiosyncrasies. This forces us to remember that they rose above their individual quirks to develop a political system that led to the freest, most prosperous, and most tolerant society that the world has ever known.

The Constitution's balance of powers, rights, and responsibilities provide the groundwork for

this society. But it is only when citizens know their freedoms, rights, and duties that the promise of our Constitution can be realized in our daily lives.

It is groups like the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution that have put in the time and energy to remind our citizens of this. They deserve all of our support and praise for the fine work they do.

NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

CONSTITUTION SIDELIGHTS 1997-1988

1. Author-historian James McGregor Burns characterized the delegates to the Constitutional Convention as "the well bred, the well fed, the well read, and the well wed."

2. The final form of the Constitution was put to a vote on September 17, 1787. Thirty-nine of the delegates present voted in favor; three were opposed. Thirteen delegates were absent and of these, seven were believed to favor the Constitution.

3. As acknowledged leader in Pennsylvania and one of the world's most recognized savants, it was Benjamin Franklin's part to entertain the delegates. He wrote to his sister that his new dining room would seat twenty-four. He had a generous hand with the port.

4. During the entire summer of 1787 Washington was a guest in the home of Robert Morris. The Morris family had bought as their summer residence a large mansion on a wooded hill above the Schuylkill river. They had an ice house, hot house, stable for twelve horses, and lived in splendid luxury.

5. A rule of secrecy existed during the Convention, for which there was some criticism. It seemed impossible to keep old Dr. Franklin quiet. It has been said that a discreet delegate would attend Franklin's convivial dinners, heading off the conversation when one of the Doctor's anecdotes threatened to reveal secrets of the Convention.

6. The Statehouse was comparatively cool when entering from the baking streets of an unusually hot summer. The east chamber was large, forty by forty with a twenty foot ceiling and no supporting pillars to break the floorspace. Tall, wide windows were on two sides, covered by slatted blinds to keep out the summer sun. Gravel had been strewn on the streets outside to deaden the sound of wheels and horses passing.

7. During an especially difficult week when agreement seemed impossible, Benjamin Franklin suggested that a chaplain be invited to open each morning meeting with prayer. North Carolina's Hugh Williamson bluntly replied that the Convention had no money to pay a chaplain. The state budgets in 1787 were exceedingly slim, and the finances of the delegates were constantly changing.

8. On Monday, May 28th, the last of the eight delegates from Pennsylvania arrived. Jared Ingersoll was to remain silent for the entire four months of the Convention. This was an extraordinary feat for the man often described as "the ablest jury lawyer in Philadelphia."

9. Washington was not a facile speaker. "He speaks with great diffidence," wrote a foreign observer, "and sometimes hesitates for a word...His language is manly and expressive." He was rarely seen to smile and his manners were uncommonly reserved. It was felt, however, that power would not turn his head, and he was never overbearing.

10. The fourth of Delaware's five delegates arrived on May 28th. Gunning Bedford, Jr., was tall, sociable, corpulent, and known as an impetuous speaker who did not hesitate to make trouble if trouble was in order. Bedford, attorney general of his state, came to